

Charleston, S. C. Oct. 30, 1865

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Dear Garrison:

James Redpath arrived in this city yesterday, with words of cheer and encouragement for me, of which I stood in great <sup>need</sup>. I came here on the 23<sup>d</sup> of last month in the confident expectation of starting an independent journal to be devoted in good earnest to the great interests of the despised, oppressed, and downtrodden in this overturned and sin-ridden part of the South. I came little dreaming that any one was occupying, or proposed to occupy the post of duty and labor to which I aspired.

When Redpath was here last summer, I wrote to him inquiring if there was, in his opinion, an opening for such a paper as I proposed publishing. He placed my letter in the hands of parties who were just beginning to



2/ move for such an enterprise. They wrote to me requesting me to state upon what terms I would sell my type and press, and also upon what terms I would engage to take editorial charge of a daily paper they were about to establish. I wrote them in reply, after which followed other correspondence resulting in the final agreement that they were to give me the low sum of \$500 for my type, press, &c., and \$1200 ~~for~~ salary per annum for my services as editor of their new paper. I valued my type, press, and printing stock at about \$800, but felt willing to sacrifice thus much on it for the benefit of a cause so noble and glorious. It was in the agreement that my passage money was to be advanced from Boston. I accordingly packed and shipped my type and press the 12<sup>th</sup> of last month from Cape Cod to New



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York, thence to be transported to Charleston. It was delayed in New York so long that it did not reach Charleston until the 7th of this month. I did not wait after shipping, but proceeded at once to Boston, where I had directed ~~the parties in Charleston to direct~~ the parties in Charleston to direct a letter to me enclosing the stipulated passage money. Much to my surprise no letter ~~had~~ was in waiting for me at the house of Cheney, Ray, & Co., ~~in whose case I had~~ I had directed the parties in C. to address their letter. I had spent nearly all my surplus funds in getting ready to go to Charleston. The expenses of ~~box~~ packing, boxing, carting, &c., together with my wardrobe outfit, had left me with little more than enough to pay my expenses to New York. But as it had been stipulated that my type and press should be paid for as soon as it reached Charleston, I concluded



4) to press on, if possible. The Captain of one of the New York and Charleston steamers was my fellow-townsman, in Barnstable, and by his courtesy I was enabled to secure passage to Charleston without paying cash down. On reaching C. I found I had been cruelly and wickedly imposed upon. I found that one Linnaeus Thurlay, now connected with a paper called the ~~Charleston~~ <sup>who</sup> South Carolina Leader, had been concerned ~~connected~~ with the party who contracted with me to bring down my type & press, early in the movement, and who had signed his name to a paper authorizing ~~me~~ ~~that~~ party to collect money to establish the same, had had a quarrel with Mr. Redpath, <sup>just before the latter went North,</sup> and without any settlement of the business, had withdrawn all connection with the ~~same~~ the original party, for the establishment of a newspaper, and soon after went North, purchased type and press, and had reached this city with it a week before I came here, and <sup>about</sup> ~~more than~~ two weeks before my type and press arrived. He brought with him a man named



Coffin, to edit his paper, and they were at work setting up the Reader when I landed.

Have patience with me, dear Garrison, though my story be unpleasant and wearisome to you.

What a predicament for me to be in! I found the colored people of Charleston had been looking for the Redpath press; but I came under great disadvantages — a stranger, a total stranger, but for the name of Mr. Redpath — no money of my own, and no money in hand of the parties to pay for the press. ~~The~~ The party whom Mr. Redpath had recommended to me as responsible <sup>with others</sup> for the purchase of the press, <sup>Mr. John L. Chavers,</sup> had put what money <sup>he</sup> had collected — I don't know where. He said there was only about \$300 raised, and Hurley had got his share of that, and put into his paper. This Mr. Hurley denies, but he tells so many contradictory stories about it and other matters connected with the business that I justly regard him with as great suspicion as I do Mr. Chavers. Several other acts of his, connected with ~~his~~



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6/ the getting of his press here in advance  
of mine, reflect great discredit upon  
his character, to say the least. He  
declared with many profane expressions,  
that he should bring to bear all his  
influence to prevent me from run-  
ning my press - not because he had  
anything against me, but "because"  
to use his own words, "Redpath has  
injured me, and I hate him; and  
no press run <sup>by</sup> ~~from~~ the influence  
of his name shall be established  
in Charleston, if I can help it."  
Mr. H. did not tell me this at  
first. He seemed to think he could  
easier effect his purpose by dis-  
couraging me, telling me falsely that  
all the moneyed influence of the city,  
as well as the intelligence, was on  
his side. We called meetings - Mr.  
Hourley even assisting to get them up,  
until he found there was a strong Red-  
path party in the city, with money to  
back it up, who expressed their de-  
termination to purchase my press.



and set me on my feet at the head of ~~an~~ a ~~daily~~ paper. He at once began to kick against the movement, prevented us from holding a public meeting in League Hall for the purpose by inducing the owner of the Hall & (one of his personal friends) to refuse its use. ~~Said~~ he was going to start a daily paper himself, and that my paper could not nor should not be run — This, too, after having declared in one public meeting that he himself would give \$500 toward starting my paper as a Daily. When reminded of this promise, he artfully dodged the issue, saying that he did not mean my paper. It was about, or but shortly previous to this time, that I discovered the real dishonesty of the man in his advising me to get all the money I could out of the new party that had befriended me, say two or three hundred dollars, and take my type and press and go North with it. I should have the benefit, he said of having seen Charleston, and received pay for the trouble of



8/ Coming down! Alas for the poor Colored people here, if they must trust the defence of their cause to such a champion as he!

I have only further to say, in regard to Hurley that his influence among the colored people of this city is rapidly on the wane. He has never enjoyed the full confidence of the colored people, and even the party now concerned with him in the ~~past~~ publication of the "Leader" are losing faith in him, and desire him to withdraw from it so as to leave them free to contract with me. This he will not do at present. His paper has now reached ~~his~~ ~~for~~ its fourth number, and seven hundred ~~papers~~ copies of the Leader is more than sufficient to meet all demands. He has no money of his own in the concern. This I heard from his own lips, after he had made the statement that he would give \$500 for the establishment of a daily paper by me. He ~~cannot~~ does not nor cannot write for the paper; nor can he prepare articles for the press. He is no printer, and has no qualification whatever for conducting ~~a~~ the business of a paper, except it may be that he



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has a flippant and ready tongue by means of which he is able to beguile these simple-minded colored people into the belief that this talent supposes the possession of all other talents necessary to the conduct of a paper. And now, mark my words; the Leader, under its present manager, viz: Timothy Hurley, cannot be long sustained.

I understand that Mr. Hurley expects to start for the North this week to try to raise money to purchase a power-press to start a Daily paper, and also type &c., for a job office. Now I don't know his influence there, but presuming it may not be inconsiderable, let me say that I feel it to be my duty to warn you that all the money he raises ostensibly for that purpose will be worse than thrown away. Let not the people of the North venture one cent in such an enterprise until they know more fully the character and purposes of the men in whose hands they trust it. Let the people here do something for the support of Mr. Hurley's weekly newspaper first.



10/ If in a city like Charleston he can get only three or four hundred subscribers for his weekly paper - the other two or three hundred <sup>copies</sup> being sent to Columbia, S.C., or to his exchanges, and the paper already entered upon its fifth week, depend upon it, there's a screw loose somewhere. <sup>My</sup> The Colored people are enthusiastic for the establishment of a newspaper here, but they have no faith in the Leader for the reasons I have named. If they will not support Mr. Hourley's weekly paper, how can it be expected that they will support a Daily paper under his management? The thing is simply preposterous.

Now a word for myself. Mr. Redpath tells me your types, ~~and~~ <sup>and</sup> ~~press~~ with imposing stones &c. are for sale after the close of your present volume for \$200. We wish you ~~to hold to~~ <sup>to hold to</sup> wait until you hear from us <sup>again</sup> ~~before~~ offering it to other parties. It is expected arrangements will be made this



week or next for starting up another  
Paper in <sup>it is believed</sup> this city in the support  
of which, the colored people will  
as a general thing unite. We shall  
try it. If the effort fails I shall re-  
turn North, I think, and get an  
outfit for a ~~new~~ weekly journal  
to be established in some other  
quarter of the great American  
field. If I start a paper  
here you may depend upon  
its being at least a bold, fear-  
less, <sup>honest</sup> and outspoken journal, what-  
ever else it may prove not to  
be. I sincerely wish — and God  
knows how earnestly I wish it —  
that it might be without a peer  
for the ability which should rule  
its editorial columns.

Since Redpath has come I have  
had occasion to regret the selling of my  
type and press. I can get the Press and  
news type back again for about \$300,  
however, and I think I will do so.



If you see fit to represent to the readers of the Liberator the state of things down here in a brief paragraph - something calculated to put them on their guard against Mr. Hurley's scheme for raising money for the support of his paper, which I think may be done without necessarily reflecting upon him, I hope you will do so; and you are at liberty to use my name as authority for any such statement, if you think proper.

Yours, with a heart beating ever warmly for the oppressed and down-trodden everywhere,

Edwin Coombs.